

Analyzing levels of altruism in generation Z

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ABSTRACT

Humans have tended to become self-centered and think about their benefit before performing any action or making a decision in today's competitive world. But are we as selfish as we think we are? Our species have enhanced capacity for empathy and unparalleled sensitivity towards needs of others. Because of which we continue to selflessly help another individual and practice this pro social behavior called altruism. Altruism is indispensable for the survival of society. Human beings' tendency to engage in pro social behaviors is unevenly distributed across the population, and this variation can be a variable of both nature and nurture. This study aims towards analyzing the level of altruism in generation Z on the basis of their gender. The sample population comprised of 50 girls and 50 boys residing in the area of Gujarat, India. The data were collected using Altruism Scale (2004) developed by Dr. S.N. Rai and Dr. Sanwat Singh. After the statistical analysis of the data, it was found that there is a significant difference between the altruism levels of males and females, where females were found to be more altruistic.

Keywords: *Altruism, Gender, Pro Social Behavior, Empathy*

Altruism can be defined as engaging in an act which is in the best interest of others rather than interest of self. It is the willingness to do things that benefit others, even if it results in disadvantages to self. We often act selfishly, meanwhile we also seem to be designed to cooperate with others. For example, when people look for mates, they look for kindness more than any other quality. People born from 1995-2015 can be called the Generation Z. This generation can be categorized as multi-taskers, better bargainers and early starters. They desire more independent work environment and as a matter of fact, 72% of them want to start their own business someday. It is the generation that wants to change the world. Here are some statistics that may challenge your notions about i Generation: 25% of them actively volunteer, 33% of them have donated money to charity, and 60% of them work to make a difference to the world. The advice of Plato, that a rich and fulfilled life is that if you want to receive, you first must give. The world slowly and gradually is accepting to the fact that altruism is the true path to happiness.

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Analyzing Levels of Altruism in Generation Z

Indians of Generation Z demographic are blessed with religions that preach oneness of all living and nonliving entities of nature, and recognize intrinsic value in them. India is the country of "*atithi devo bhava*", it is the land of Mother Teresa and lives with the ideology of "service before self". Despite all this, India has one of the lowest rates of organ donation in the world with 0.5 donor per million of population, which is far less compared to over 30 donors per million in most of the western countries. A small online survey conducted on 150 people of Generation Z by me on organ donation gave contrasting results. The results showed that 93% of them are willing to donate their organ(s), but only 18% have pledged as an organ donor. This study aims at finding the levels of altruism in Generation Z living in India. This will not only give the idea about the current altruistic practices, but also the evolution of this pro social behavior, and how the ancestral beliefs and morals have framed this generation. The results of the study can further be used to find a cause-effect relationship between altruism levels and crime rates, altruism and anti social behaviors, altruism levels and perceived loneliness, why India has such low rates of organ donation and many other variables.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

Review Stage Evolutionary Explanation of Pro Social Behavior

Scholars have argued that there are two types of altruism: Kin altruism (Hamilton, 1964) and Reciprocal Altruism (Trivers, 1971). Human Evolution is a strong advocate that living beings have the primary motto to reproduce and look for resources that facilitate reproduction, in order to provide for oneself and one's successor. The resources include food, safety and physical protection, all of which are, and have been in scarce supply throughout human evolution. Kin altruism implies helping related persons in order to improve their – and one's own reproductive success and it is facilitated by kin selection. Reciprocal altruism entails making sacrifices for beings who are unrelated to the clan and are likely to provide at least as much help in the future in an exchanging fashion, so it includes an evolved ability to recognize potential partners to transaction and the likelihood that they will indeed reciprocate (Fehr and Fischbacher, 2003; Trivers, 1971).

Biological & Psychological Altruism

Psychological altruism means acting out for the well-being of others, without giving attention to your own self-interest. Biological altruism refers to engaging in behavior that helps the survival of a species which that particular individual belongs, without benefiting the individual who's being altruistic. Biological altruism isn't a challenge to psychological egoism, but to what it is called the selfish gene hypothesis. This hypothesis states that genes are solely in the business of replicating themselves and that an animal is basically the tool of its genes. Genes make animals behave and those very genes get replicated as often as possible in subsequent generations. Richard Dawkins coined the phrase "selfish gene", as a metaphor. He was just trying to say that genes act as if they are totally self-centered. It turns out that lots of organisms behave in ways that are threat to their own chances of survival, but are beneficial to the reproductive chances of fellow organisms. For example, a Vervet monkey will give warning sign other monkeys in the presence of predators, even though this attracts attention to itself, increasing its own threat from the predator.

The Empathy-Altruism Hypotheses

The empathy-altruism hypothesis states that empathic concern produces altruistic motivation (Batson, 1987, 2011). This other-oriented emotion has been called by many names, including pity, compassion, tenderness, and sympathy. It involves feeling for the other, not feeling as the other feels. In social psychology, this other-oriented emotion has often been called

Analyzing Levels of Altruism in Generation Z

empathy (Hoffman, 1975; Krebs, 1975; Scotland, 1969). To emphasize that the empathic emotion at issue is in response to another's suffering, we use the term empathic concern as well as empathy. Altruism and egoism have a lot in common. Each refers to a motivational state; each is concerned with the ultimate goal (increase someone's welfare) of this motivational state.. The term altruism has been used in three other ways, 1- as a helping behavior, not motivation; 2- as acting morally; 3- as helping to gain internal, rather than external rewards. Helping another person, even at great cost to self, may be altruistically motivated, egoistically motivated, or both. However, it must be determined whether benefit to the other evoked by empathy is altruism or egoism.

Negative State Relief Model

The negative-state relief model states that homo sapiens have an innate drive to reduce negative moods. They can be reduced by engaging in any mood-elevating behavior, including pro social (mainly helping) behavior. This theory predicts that under certain circumstances, a temporary feeling of sadness is likely to result in an increased willingness to help others. For example, a person who is sad because he/she didn't score well in the exams is more likely to help an old lady in the grocery store.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Joonghwan Jeon and David M. Buss (2007) studied "Altruism towards Cousins". They hypothesized that psychological adaptations have evolved to regulate cousin-directed altruism levels according to the different categories of cousins. They developed formal mathematical model that predicts that individuals should be acting altruistically towards their mother's sister's (MoSis) children the most and least towards their father's brother's (FaBro) children. An empirical data was collected by 195 samples (84 female and 111male), age range 18-27 years. The results showed that participants expressed willingness to help in the following ascending order: Father's Brother's children, Father's Sister's children, Mother's Brother's children and Mother's Sister's children.

Hsiu-Ling Chen, Hsueh-Liang Fan and Chin-Chung Tsai(2013) studies "The Role of Community Trust and Altruism in Knowledge Sharing: An Investigation of a Virtual Community of Teacher Professionals". This study aims to analyze the mechanism behind an individuals' knowledge sharing intentions and behaviors. A sample of 332 teachers within a virtual community of teacher professionals (i.e., SCTNet) in Taiwan were the survey population. They found that teachers with higher community trust have more willingness to share knowledge, which in turn increases the chances of them engaging in knowledge sharing. Henceforth, it was concluded that there is a positive relationship between community trust and knowledge sharing intention. Knowledge sharing was much stronger when teachers perceived a high level of altruism than it was when they had a low level of altruism.

Priyanka Samuel and Dr. Smita Pandey (2018) studied "Life Satisfaction and Altruism Levels among Religious Leaders". The study analyzes the relationship between altruism and life satisfaction among religious leaders. A total of 25 Christian Church leaders were evaluated on life satisfaction and altruism scales. Total three standard scales were used and collected data was analyzed using SPSS. Results revealed that there is a positive correlation between life satisfaction and altruism. Which means high altruism contributed to high life satisfaction and vice a versa among the sample population.

Patil Vishwanth Malagonda and Prof. Kulkarni A. P.(2018) studied "Psychological Study of Altruism and Aggression of High School Students". The study was under taken to evaluate

Analyzing Levels of Altruism in Generation Z

the Altruism and Aggression levels of High School students in Gandhinagar. The sample of the study comprised of 70 students with equal representation of each gender. The data was analyzed by using 't' test to find out the difference in Altruism and Aggression. The results indicated that there is no significant difference found between male and female students on Altruism as well as Aggression levels.

Research Gap

The area of psychological altruism is not as much explored and studied as biological altruism. Thus, it calls for a need of more research in this field. Though altruism levels have been analyzed before but always in correlation with different variables. Henceforth, this study exclusively aims at analyzing the altruism levels in Generation Z of India and how it differs in the binary genders.

Objective

The main objective of this study is to analyze levels of altruism in female and male population of Generation Z (birth year 1995-2015).

Hypotheses

H₁- There is a significant difference between altruism levels of males and females.

H₀- There is no significant difference between altruism levels of males and females.

METHODOLOGY

Variables

The altruism levels of the sample is the dependent variable while the gender and age of the sample is independent variable.

Sample Population

The sample population is of age group range 18-25 years, residing in the area of Ahmedabad, India. The ratio of males to females has been kept uniform and have been selected at random regardless of their class, sex, and socioeconomic status. Questionnaires were distributed among 100 individuals, 50 males and 50 females, through physical forms. All the participants sampled were informed consents.

Questionnaire

A standard questionnaire called "Altruism scale (ALTS)" was used to collect data from the sample population. This scale is prepared by Dr. S.N.Rai & Dr Sanwant Singh and consists a total of 30 items. This scale is highly reliable and valid. Each item of the scale has three alternative responses, i.e., altruistic, neutral and egoistic. Reliability coefficient is 0.84 and validity co-efficient is 0.63 ($p < 0.01$), as stated in the manual.

Analysis

The data in the study has been collected using Stratified Random Sampling. This method involves division of population into smaller groups called strata. A random sample from each strata is taken in a number proportional to the strata. These are then pooled to form a random sample. The collected data was statistically analyzed using 't' test. A t-test is a type of inferential statistic used to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of two groups, which may be related in certain features. This test is most relevant to find the difference in levels of altruism in females and males.

Analyzing Levels of Altruism in Generation Z

RESULTS

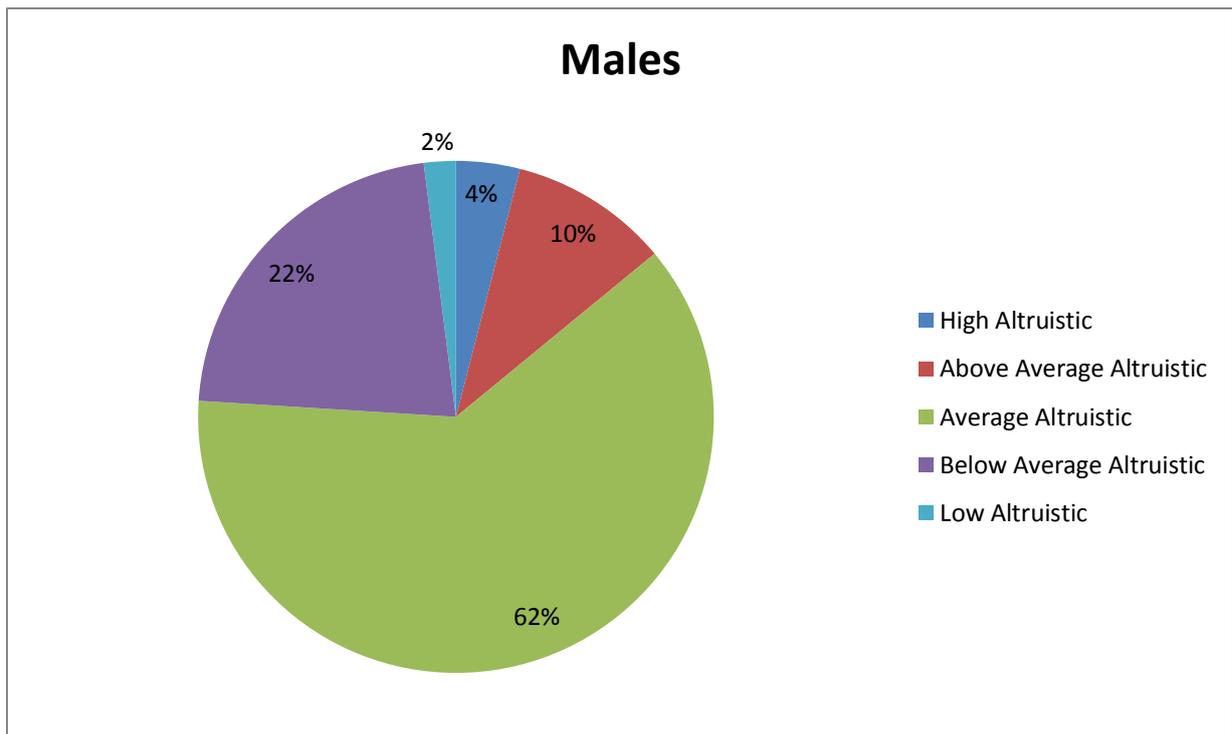
Table I: t-test assuming unequal variance

	Variable 1	Variable 2
Mean	34.2	40.18
Variance	40.612245	32.150612
Observations	50	50
P(T<=t) two-tail	3.04E-06	

Interpretation- Variable 1 represents male samples and Variable 2 represents female samples. If the $p\text{-value} < 0.01$, then the Null Hypothesis is rejected and Alternate Hypotheses is accepted. Here, the p value obtained is $p = 3.04 \times 10^{-6}$ i.e. 0.000000304 which is less than 0.01. The Alternative hypotheses has been accepted. There is a significant difference between altruism levels of males and females.

Table II: Raw score distribution

Raw Score Range		Grade	Level of Altruism	Number of Individuals	
Males	Females			Males	Females
55-60	52-60	A	Extremely High Altruistic	0	0
47-54	45-51	B	High Altruistic	2	12
40-46	38-44	C	Above Average Altruistic	5	24
30-39	29-37	D	Average Altruistic	31	14
23-29	22-28	E	Below Average Altruistic	11	0
15-22	15-21	F	Low Altruistic	1	0
0-14	0-14	G	Extremely Low Altruistic	0	0



Fig(a): Raw Score Categorization for Males

Analyzing Levels of Altruism in Generation Z

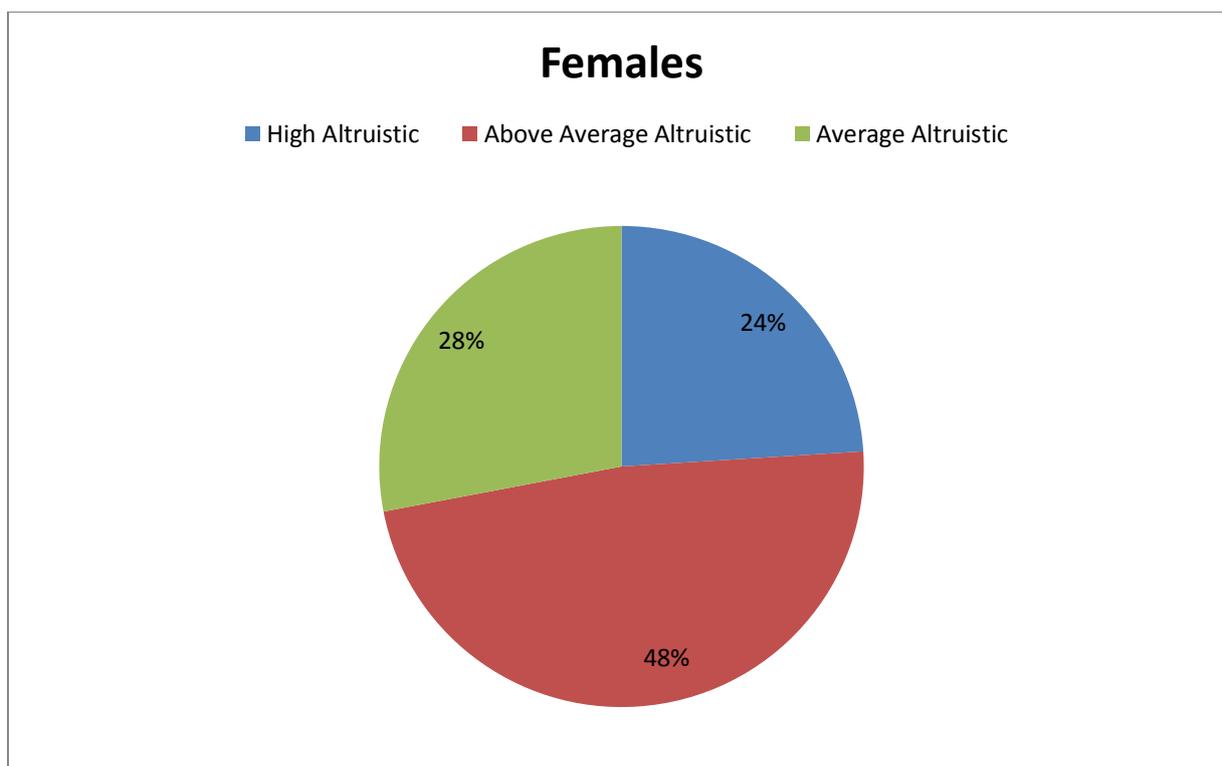


Fig (b): Raw Score Categorization for Females

CONCLUSION

It can be seen in table 1.0, females have a mean raw score of 40.18 and males have a mean raw score of 34.2, 60 being the upper limit for any individual. This proves that there is a significant difference between the altruism levels of males and females, and females indeed have higher altruism levels. Figures 2.1 and 2.2 can be referred for the same. Table 2.0 shows that not a single individual was categorized under grade A (extremely highly altruistic) which is an area of concern, but on the brighter side, not a single person was in grade G (extremely low altruistic) either. But what can be the reason of such extremes.

Daniel Batson in his book, "Altruism in Humans" (2011) talks about the possibility that humans have the capacity to care for others for their sakes more rather than simply for our own. What he meant to say was humans are more altruistic than egoist. He had conducted an extensive series of theory-testing laboratory experiments over the past 35 years, and gave 'the empathy- altruism hypotheses' which states that states that empathic concern produces altruistic motivation.

The difference in the altruism levels of both genders can be explained by of biologically different both genders are designed to function. Oxytocin, commonly known as love hormone is produced by the hypothalamus and is responsible for breast development, milk production, uterine contractions in females and parental feelings in males. Oxytocin works commonly in both genders as a bonding hormone, and promotes inter personal connections. However, Women release more oxytocin than men, which makes them more nurturing, caring and empathetic to a fellow human being. A study conducted " Oxytocin Increases Generosity" by Paul Zak et. al (2007), participants were injected with 40 IU oxytocin and others were on placebo. Both were engaged in a blinded, one-shot decision on how to split a sum of money

Analyzing Levels of Altruism in Generation Z

with a stranger that could be rejected. Those on Oxytocin were 80% more generous than those given a placebo.

Testosterone is another hormone which is found 5-10 times more in men than women, and has an inverse effect on pro social behavior. A study "Testosterone Administration Decreases Generosity in the Ultimatum Game" by Paul Zak et. al (2009), gave testosterone to 25 men to establish its impact on prosocial behaviors in a double-blind within-subjects design and also confirmed participants' testosterone levels before and after treatment through blood draws. They found that men with artificially raised T, compared to themselves on placebo, were 27% less generous towards strangers with money they controlled.

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Analyzing Levels of Altruism in Generation Z

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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